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AUTHOR Chance, Edward W.; Neuhauser, Margo
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ABSTRACT

The traditional underrepresentation of women and minorities in administrative positions continues to be a reality in most states. This paper describes the Women and Minorities in Administration Program, developed by the South Dakota Equal Educational Opportunities Office in an attempt to alleviate this disparity. The program was developed to provide an alternative means for females and minorities to pursue and complete a masters degree in elementary or secondary administration. The core of the model program included a weekend scheduling format, reduced tuition rates, and innovative elective courses designed specifically for the participants. Short-term program success is evidenced by positive individual evaluations and through preliminary data reflecting the number of participants who went on to secure leadership positions. (Author/TES)

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PREPARING WOMEN AND MINORITIES AS RURAL SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

Dr. Edward W. Chance
Assistant Professor
University of Oklahoma
Norman, Oklahoma 73019

Ms. Margo Neuhauser
Graduate Research Assistant
University of Oklahoma
Norman, Oklahoma 73019

Running head: Preparing Rural Administrators

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ABSTRACT

The traditional underrepresentation of women and minorities in administrative positions continues to be a reality in most states. The paper decribes the Women and Minorities in Administration Program, developed by the South Dakota Equal Educational Opportunities Office in an attempt to alleviate this disparity. The program was developed to provide an alternate means by which females and minorities could pursue and complete a masters degree in elementary or secondary administration. A week-end scheduling format, reduced tuition rates, and innovtive elective courses designed specifically for the participants provided the core of the model program.

PREPARING WOMEN AND MINORITIES AS RURAL SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

INTRODUCTION:

The national underrepresentation of women and minorities in administrative positions in schools has been and continues to be a major focus of research. Sadker (1985) reported that in the early 20th century, 55% of the educational administration positions were held by females. By 1970, this number had declined to 20% and by 1980, had increased slightly to only 25%. She also indicated that by 1982, only 1.8% of the superintendent positions in the United States were filled by females while overall minority women administrative positions represented less than 5% of all administrative and supervisory positions.

A study recently conducted by the National Center for Education Information (NCEI) sought "to ascertain who the people administering the educational system for elementary and secondary students are" (Feistritzer, 1988, p.3) and found the pattern of white male domination continues. Results of the NCEI survey were collected from 3,577 surveys of current elementary and secondary administrators and superintendents. The NCEI survey provided a clear profile which showed that 96% of the superintendent positions were held by males. It also

revealed that 97% of all superintendents were white. Additionally, 76% of the public school principalships were occupied by men, of which 90% were white.

Recognizing that the issue of male administrative dominance is an important issue, the South Dakota Equal Educational Opportunities Office (EEO) developed a program to increase the number of women and minorities pursuing administrative degrees. Funded through Title IV of the U.S. Department of Education, the EEO office developed the Women and Minorities in Administration program as one of the activities of the overall grant to the state of South Dakota. Requests for this type of assistance had previously been received from various educational leaders throughout the state.

LITERATURE REVIEW:

A review of the literature and relevant research found that while women comprise 69% of the overall teaching positions in the nation, they hold only a fraction of the administrative positions (Feistritzer, 1988). Since the enactment of Title IX in 1972, it could be assumed that there would be an increase in the number of female administrators. Overall, however, women accounted for only 12% of the nation's principalships. An additional analysis of the data indicated that 20% of all elementary principals were female while less than 4% of all secondary principals were women (Fauth, 1984). Pounder (1987)

reported that minorities also showed an underrepresentation in educational leadership positions. Fourteen percent of school administrative positions were occupied by minorities according to her findings. The 1987 National Commission on Excellence in Educational Administration report, Leaders for America's Schools, reported that minorities are "dramatically under-represented in the educational administration field and that the minority enrollments in educational preparation programs have failed to increase and in some instances have declined." (p.11)

Several factors were cited by Metzger (1985) to explain the lack of women in educational leadership positions. These included:

> sex-role stereotyping, sex discrimination, personal and family-imposed constraints, women's low career aspirations, women's lack of self-confidence and initiative, women's lack of sponsors within the existing power structure and an insufficient pool of highly qualified women (p. 292).

Pounder (1987) also found that racial biases, career aspirations, socialization and career paths were cited as factors contributing to the low numbers of minorities in administrative roles. Shakeshaft (1984) identified analogous internal and external barriers which keep women and minorities

out of formal leadership positions. These barriers included:

> low career aspirations, self-limiting beliefs and attitudes, lack of motivation, poor self-image, sex-role stereotyping, discrimination in schools and society, lack of adequate professional preparation, too few role models, and the demands of family and home life (p.68).

Realizing the existence of certain prevalent barriers and conditions does not mitigate the responsibility of educators and educational institutions today to provide all people with the opportunity to become effective leaders. Training programs must be made available to increase the pool of women and minorities who can serve as effective leaders and role models for America's youth. This goal cannot be met unless programs are designed to promote excellence and equity. Shakeshaft (1984), in her research, found that

> although the enrollment figures in departments of administration across the U.S. have changed, the training approach, with few exceptions, remained the same. The ideal school administrator was portrayed as male--literally the man in the principal's office (p.67).

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROGRAM:

THE PARTICIPANTS:

Like most states, the school administration field in South Dakota is dominated by white males. The Equal Educational Opportunities Office of the South Dakota Division of Education developed the Women and Minorities in Administration program as a pilot project to increase the number of minority and/or

female school administrators. The EEO office determined a program other than the traditional "on-campus" approach that is normally available to students was necessary if the targeted populations were going to be able to participate. The major concepts of the program which made it possible for women and minorities seeking a Master's degree in administration to participate were that classes were offered on a week-end basis, and that course were to be provided at a reduced tuition rate. South Dakota State University (SDSU) located in Brookings, South Dakota, agreed to be the institutional provider of the program. In addition, SDSU agreed to provide tuition at a reduced rate to cover the processing of administrative fees only. Instructors were paid through the resources of the grant. South Dakota State University staff at the main campus and at their satellite office, the West River Graduate Center in Rapid City, South Dakota, provided information and direction regarding the course offerings. Additional instructors from Nebraska and Colorado, who were recognized as effective leaders, were chosen to teach portions of the program. All instructors were selected because of their teaching ability as well as their ability to serve as dynamic and innovative role models.

Initially, an article describing the possibility of providing such a program was printed in the state educational

newsletter, The Challenge, and disseminated to all districts in the state. One hundred seventy-six responses or inquiries of interest were received. Because a majority of the responses were from the western part of the state, Rapid City was chosen as the site for the program. Ninety-eight persons attended the orientation meeting where the program was further described and questions were answered. No registration or commitment to the program was requested at this initial meeting.

It was explained to the attendees that classes would be held on a week-end basis, including Friday evenings, all day Saturday and some Sunday mornings. The South Dakota Board of Regents mandates fifteen hours of contact time per one hour of credit granted so a three hour course would require 45 hours of contact time. This meant that each course would take four week-ends to complete. Classes were held on alternate week-ends as often as possible, since several participants would be traveling over 300 miles round trip in order to participate.

One of the major concerns of the program planners was that the group may become too isolated and begin to function only within the group unless they were exposed to other students and philosophies. To alleviate this concern, participants were required to attend one complete summer session of on-campus instruction. This was the only deviation from the week-end format and was explained to the prospective participates at

the onset of the program. Upon hearing these explanations and description of the program, seventy-six people decided to participate in the first elective course..

At the conclusion of this course, thirty-five participants decided to continue with the program. Persons deciding not to continue cited the amount of travel involved and the time away from their families as the reasons for discontinuing the program. All of the participants leaving the program expressed regret but felt their families were their top priority at this time. Since the participants discontinuing the program were female, this reasoning coincides with the research regarding why women fail to enter the administrative field (Zurfluh, 1988). Eventually, eleven more participants were unable to complete the entire program. Two of these took additional course work on their own and graduated before the group, one completed all the required and elective course work except the internship and moved out of state, three moved out of state prior to the summer session and five persons withdrew because of the travel required, family commitments and/or personal reasons.

Twenty-four participants completed the entire program. Each of them held full-time teaching or educationally related positions throughout the program. Sixteen of the participants were classroom teachers, three were employees of educational

cooperatives, three were employees of the state Division of Education, one was a community college librarian and one was the public relations director for a public school. Seventeen of the participants received Master Degrees and administrative certification at the elementary level with the remaining seven receiving degrees and certification at the secondary level.

In order to obtain a Masters Degree in Educational Administration from South Dakota State University, participants were required to complete twenty-two graduate hours of required course work and eleven hours of electives. An Internship of 2-3 credit hours was also required. The focus of the eleven hours of electives provided the opportunity for the Women and Minorities in Administration Program to offer unique and innovative courses not commonly available through the regular administrative program. These electives centered around the importance of the administrator as a visionary leader and provided a means for the participants to become aware of research available regarding the concept of vision and instructional leadership. To this end, specific course offerings were designed and included: "The Principalship", "Instructional Leadership", "Fundamentals of Leadership", "The Equity Principal" and a "Practicum of Exemplary Schools".

THE ELECTIVE COURSES:

The first course, "The Principalship", was an introduction to the many aspects of building level administration and featured a variety of instructors who were recognized as effective leaders, either by their individual schools, peers, or by the South Dakota Principal of the Year program. This course became the core of the program, where participants developed comprehensive plans, stating their personal and professional goals, mission statements and visions of an effective school. Participants were given a variety of learning and leadership instruments and encouraged to examine themselves and incorporate the information provided from the results of the instruments into their overall comprehensive plans.

The next elective course specifically designed for the program was the "Practicum of Exemplary Schools" and involved a trip to schools recognized as being on the 'cutting-edge' of sound educational practices and trends. Schools in Douglas Wyoming, and Boulder and Vail, Colorado were chosen because of the leadership qualities of their administrators and their ability to nurture an effective learning environment. Participants were also able to meet with personnel from the Mid-Continent Regional Education Laboratory in order to become more familiar with their services and degree of expertise.

Besides being exposed to quality schools and administrative teams, the Practicum provided the group with an unplanned bonus. Because of the many hours involved in traveling and being in an intense group situation, the group later reported that it was this course that provided the opportunity for bonding and networking to occur which otherwise may have taken months to achieve. As the result of the Practicum, the Women and Minorities in Administration Program developed an internal cohesive and supportive network which would prove to be invaluable to its membership.

Upon returning to the week-end class format, "Instructional Leadership" and "Fundamentals of Leadership" courses were taught. Course work for these classes included assertiveness training, career planning, resume writing, interview techniques, time management, teacher interviewing surveys, gender/ethnic awareness and networking strategies. The final elective course was "The Equity Principal" which was developed and taught by Ms. Dee Grayson, a Los Angeles County Department of Education Equity Specialist. This course helped participants recognize and understand biases and how inequitable treatment negatively impacted students and staff alike. This course included research and self-assessment on the development of effective administrators and how they must provide all students the opportunity to achieve regardless of

gender, race, disability, national origin and/or socio-economic status.

THE REQUIRED COURSES:

Upon the completion of the electives, participants began the required course work. "Research and Writing" and "School Law" were taught at the Rapid City site utilizing the same week-end format as the electives. Following the conclusion of these traditional courses and as per program planning, participants were required to attend one summer of on-campus instruction. Participants completed twelve hours of course work during the summer of 1988. Once on-campus, fears of isolation and "cliquishness" previously anticipated by the program developers were soon dispelled. The Women and Minorities in Administration group were able to accept and be accepted by the other students and an enlarged networking system soon flourished. Many within the program developed professional and personal relationships with students who were not program participants and maintain these relationships today.

Upon completion of the summer session, two hurdles remained for the program participants. One three-hour "Group Processes" course and the individual "Internships" had yet to be completed. Because the group members by this time knew each other so well, the "Group Processes" course proved to be a

challenge for the instructor. Following the course, however, group members all agreed that the sequence was highly desirable since they could now recognize the roles individual members played throughout the program. Prior knowledge of the type and degree of interactions may have inhibited participant interaction and development if known earlier.

The Internship program proved to be a valuable experience for the group. A variety of Clinicals were conducted, again on a week-end basis, to provide further skill development for the participants as they embarked on their Internships. The Clinicals focused on further analysis of leadership styles, role-playing, and in-basket activities. Individual internships varied from two to three credit hours, depending upon the participants. Each person was able to individually select an administrator they desired to work with in their particular areas. Evaluations of the internships indicated they were a very important and valuable portion of the overall program.

CONCLUSION:

The Women and Minorities in Administration program began in March, 1987 and concluded all elective and required course work in March, 1989. Students participated in graduation ceremonies at South Dakota State University in May, 1989.

Final statistics show thirty-five participants completed one third or more of the course work with twenty-four women

completing the entire program. Of these twenty-four , nine participants actively pursued administrative positions following graduation. Of those seeking administrative positions, 100% were successful in securing employment.

Like any first-year or first-time project, evaluation and hindsight provide valuable information for programmatic improvement. Overall participant evaluations of this program were excellent with numerous responses recognizing the networking made available from the program as the most valuable aspect. The intense week-end format, however, was designated as the most frustrating portion of the project. If the program were to continue or be adapted by other states or institutions, these concerns would need to be addressed.

Unfortunately for the program, the four minority women who initially entered the program and remained for at least 1/3 of the time, eventually discontinued because of the excessive travel required from the reservation to the course site. It is recommended by the program planners that if a similar program is to be provided for a specific group that considerations be made to assure this group the opportunity to participate. In South Dakota making this program available on or near Indian reservations would alleviate the excessive travel concern. A need for such a program is evident in South Dakota when less than 2% of the administrators in the state are Native

American, yet the state has an overall Indian student population of 15% and most reservation schools have 85% or more Indian students. These children must be able to see themselves as future leaders and programs such as the Women and Minorities in Administration fills part of this need.

Short term measure of success of the program in preparing women and minorities for administrative positions is evidenced by the number of participants who sought and successfully secured leadership positions as well as the positive individual evaluations of the program. The following chart depicts the results of the program and designates the participants who pursued administration posts.

WOMEN AND MINORITIES IN ADMINISTRATION PARTICIPANT SURVEY

Participant and Degree Earned:	Position During Program:	Pursued Adm. Pos.:	Position Obtained:
1. Elem Ad	Elem Tchr	No	
2. Elem Ad	Elem Tchr	Yes	Curr Dir
3. Sec Ad	Jr Hi Tchr	No	
4. Elem Ad	State Dept	Yes	Elem Prin
5. Elem Ad	Elem Tchr	No	
6. Sec Ad	Pub Rel Dir	Yes	Co-op Dir
7. Elem Ad	Co-op	Yes	Ass't Spec Ed
8. Sec Ad	Jr Hi Tchr	Yes	Curr Dir
9. Elem Ad	Elem Tchr	No	

10. Elem Ad	Elem Tchr	No	
11. Sec Ad	Sec Tchr	No	
12. Sec Ad	Co-op	No	
13. Elem Ad	Elem Tchr	No	
14. Elem Ad	Elem Tchr	No	
15. Sec Ad	Jr Hi Tchr	Yes	Asst Prin
16. Elem Ad	Elem Tchr	No	
17. Elem Ad	State Dept	Yes	Curr Dir
18. Elem Ad	Elem Tchr	No	
19. Elem Ad	Elem Tchr	Yes	Spec Ed Dir
20. Elem Ad	Elem Tchr	No	
21. Elem Ad	Elem Tchr	Yes	Elem Prin
22. Sec Ad	Col Libr	No	
23 Sec Ad	Co-op Dir	No	
24. Elem Ad	State Dept	Yes	PhD Cand

It is interesting to note that of all the participants obtaining administrative positions, only one person had to relocate from her home in order to obtain a principalship. Two of the other persons obtaining positions commute 30 miles or less while the rest of the participants accepting administrative positions were able to remain in their districts. The only other exception is the participant who has

become a PhD candidate and has moved out of state in order to attend school.

Long-term measurement of success of the program cannot be ascertained at this time. Follow-up evaluation will include documentation of the participants who successfully secure and sustain administrative positions in the future. Additionally, the impact these participants have on the level of learning of their students and their ability to become effective instructional leaders will need to be assessed. It is the desire of the program developers, that this program be used as an effective model to help create visionary leaders who will be responsible for guiding staff and students alike into the 21st century. Educational equity cannot become a non-priority issue as schools face other major problems such as inadequate funding, accountability, voucher attendance systems, competency testing and drug abuse programs. Educational excellence without equity is truly a contradiction of terms.

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